

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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AMCONSUL GOTEBORG

CONFIDENTIAL STOCKHOLM 4860

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SW, CZ

SUBJECT: CZECH DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER CANCELS VISIT TO SWEDEN

REF: STOCKHOLM 4555

1. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED. SWEDISH PRESS REPORTED ON SEPTEMBER 7 THAT AN OFFICIAL VISIT TO SWEDEN BY CZECH DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER DUSAN SPACIL, SCHEDULED FOR SEPTEMBER 12-15, HAD BEEN CANCELLED (SOME ACCOUNTS SAY POSTPONED). IN NOTIFYING SWEDISH MFA OF THE CANCELLATION ON SEPTEMBER 6, CZECH AMBASSADOR TO SWEDEN PAVEL DZUNDA REPORTEDLY REFERRED TO AN ELECTION CAMPAIGN SPEECH DELIVERED BY FOREIGN MINISTER SVEN ANDERSSON AT VARNAS ON AUGUST 21, THE 8TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SOVIET INVASION OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA, AS ONE FACTOR IN THE CZECH DECISION TO RECONSIDER THE VISIT.

2. ANDERSSON'S PSEECH TO A SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC RALLY ON AUGUST 21 WAS IGNORED BY THE MEDIA AT THE TIME. BECAUSE OF THE CZECH REACTION, HOWEVER, THE "OFFENSIVE" PASSAGE IN THE

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SPEECH WAS PUBLISHED IN SEVERAL STOCKHOLM PAPERS ON

SEPTEMBER 7, AS FOLLOWS: "THERE IS A REASON TODAY ON AUGUST 21 TO RECALL WHAT HAPPENED IN A COUNTRY IN EASTERN EUROPE EXACTLY EIGHT YEARS AGO. ON THAT DAY CZECHOSLOVAKIA WAS INVADED BY THE SOVIET UNION AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE WARSAW PACT. THIS WAS A DEFEAT OF FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY. AT THE SAME TIME IT DEMONSTRATED THE INHUMANITY OF A COMMUNIST FORM OF GOVERNMENT. THE ANSWER TO THE CITIZENS' DEMANDS FOR INCREASED INFLUENCE AND FREEDOM WAS ARMOURED TANKS AND PRISON. AND EVEN TODAY PEOPLE ARE COERCED TO SILENCE. THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS SUPPORTS PEOPLES FIGHT FOR NATIONAL FREEDOM. WE MAINTAIN THAT THE SMALL NATIONS HAVE A RIGHT OF INDEPENDENCE VIS-A-VIS THE SUPER POWERS. THAT IS WHY WE DEFENDED THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE'S RIGHT TO DECIDE THEIR OWN FUTURE. THAT IS WHY WE SERIOUSLY CONDEMNED THE INVASION OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA."

3. ASKED BY CONSERVATIVE SVENSKA DAGBLADET FOR HIS RESPONSE TO THE CZECH VISIT CANCELLATION, FOREIGN MINISTER ANDERSSON SAID HE SAW NO REASON TO TAKE BACK ANYTHING IN HIS SPEECH. HE SAID, " THE FACT THAT CZECHOSLOVAKIA HAS REACTED IN THIS WAY IS TO BE REGRETTED, BUT THERE IS NOTHING WE CAN DO ABOUT IT. IT MERELY INDICATES HOW SENSITIVE THEY ARE ON THE SUBJECT."

END UNCLASSIFIED.

4. BEGIN CONFIDENTIAL. COMMENT: ANDERSSON'S LITTLE-PUBLISHED CONDEMNATION OF THE 1968 SOVIET INVASION AND THE PUPPET CZECH REGIME ACCURATELY REFLECTS WIDESPREAD SWEDISH SENTIMENTS. SWEDISH-CZECH RELATIONS, COLD SINCE THE FALL OF THE DUBCEK REGIME, BECAME EVEN CHILLIER IN APRIL 1975 WHEN PALME DESCRIBED HUSAK AND COMPANY AS THE "BEASTS OF DICTATORSHIP." THE SPACIL VISIT, IT IS GENERALLY BELIEVED, WAS TO BE A FIRST STEP ON THE LONG ROAD TO NORMALCY. WITH ITS CANCELLATION, THAT TIMETABLE HAS BEEN SERIOUSLY UPSET. THE PUBLICITY NOW GIVEN ANDERSSON'S REFERENCES TO CZECHOSLOVAKIA AND THE CZECH RESPONSE MUST BE CONSIDERED A PLUS FOR THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS IN THEIR BATTLE TO RETAIN GOVERNMENT POWER. FOREIGN POLICY HAS NOT BEEN A FACTOR THUS FAR IN THE CAMPAIGN. THERE EXISTS, NEVERTHELESS, A LINGERING RESENTMENT IN THE MINDS OF THOUSANDS OF NON-SOCIALIST VOTERS OVER THE PALME GOVERNMENT'S SHARP CRITICISM OF U.S. POLICIES IN VIETNAM AND ELSEWHERE AND THE FACT THAT SWEDISH-AMERICAN

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RELATIONS WERE ALLOWED TO DETERIORATE SO DRASTICALLY. NOW CAUGHT UP IN AN EXTREMELY TIGHT ELECTION CAMPAIGN, THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS UNDOUBTEDLY HOPE TO DEMONSTRATE THAT SWEDISH FOREIGN POLICY IS BALANCED AND THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS NOT FAILED TO CRITICIZE "EVEL" WHEREVER IT IS FOUND. IN THAT CONTEXT, THE CZECH DECISION TO CANCEL SPACIL'S VISIT WILL BE PUT FORTH AS PROOF OF THE AUTHENTICITY OF THIS BALANCE.

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